

HOWDEN  
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Annual Report  
OF THE  
Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE YEAR ENDING

December 31st, 1949

# Howden Rural District

*To the Chairman and Members of the  
Howden Rural District Council*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I submit my Annual Report for the year ending December 31st, 1949.

## STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

- 1—Area (in acres) 69,963.
- 2—Estimate of the average population of the area during 1949—Civilian 12,030 ; Total 12,060.
- 3—Number of inhabited houses at the end of 1948 according to Rate Books—3,478.
- 4—Rateable Value—£37,141.
- 5—Sum represented by a Penny Rate—£136/5/9.

The chief industry throughout the District is Agriculture ; other employment being provided by the Flax Mill, Ouse Chemical Works, the Creosote Works, Brickyards, Railways and Market Gardening.

## PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS.

A part-time Medical Officer of Health.

A full-time Sanitary Inspector and Building Surveyor, with certificates A.R.San.I. and M.S.I.A., and an Assistant Sanitary Inspector.

The Isolation Hospital for the Howden Rural Area is the Westfield Hospital.

## VITAL STATISTICS.

### BIRTHS.

			M.	F.	Total.
Live Births—	Legitimate ...	...	97	91	188
	Illegitimate ...	...	14	8	22
Total ...			111	99	210
			M.	F.	Total.
Still Births—	Legitimate ...	..	1	0	
	Illegitimate ...	...	1	0	
Total ...			2	0	

The Birth Rate in the Howden Rural District per 1,000 of the Population—17.45.

The Birth Rate of England and Wales per 1,000 of the Population—16.7.

Still Birth Rate for Howden Rural Area—.16.

Still Birth Rate for England and Wales—.39.

#### DEATHS.

	M.	F.	Total.
Total Deaths in the Howden Rural Area during 1949 ... ..	90	68	158
Death Rate in the Howden Rural Area—13.13.			
Death Rate for England and Wales—11.7.			

#### MATERNAL MORTALITY.

Deaths from Puerperal Causes—nil.

Death from Puerperal Cause in England and Wales per 1,000 Births—.82.

This indicates great improvement in the safety of Confinement due partly to the improved arrangements and conditions, and partly to the new Drugs available for infected cases.

#### INFANT MORTALITY.

	M.	F.	Total.
Deaths of Children under 1 year of age in the Howden Area ... ..	5	3	8
Infant Death Rate per 1,000 Births—39.			
Infant Death Rate per 1,000 Births for England and Wales—32.			

#### CHIEF CAUSES OF DEATH.

Heart and Circulatory Diseases—74.

Cancer—27.

Apoplexy—9.

Accidents (including Road Traffic, 1)—5.

Tuberculosis—2.

Bronchitis and Pneumonia—14.

All other causes—27.

#### CONCLUSIONS.

The Birth Rate and Death Rate are both about the average for the District and the Country.

Again there were no Deaths from Puerperal Causes.

There were only 2 Deaths from Tuberculosis out of a Population of 12,000.

## GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES.

Pathological Examinations are carried out at the Beverley Area Laboratory.

## INFANT WELFARE.

This has now been taken over by the County Medical Officer, and continues to be well attended.

## MATERNITY.

County Maternity Nurses are available in all parts of the Area.

Beds in the Beverley and Goole Maternity Homes are available for Special Cases, but there is still a shortage of beds for this purpose.

This shortage is widespread throughout the Country.

## WATER.

The Supply from Newbald, Goole and Pocklington is good average water, and regular testing proves it to be very free from Impurity.

## AMBULANCE SERVICES.

There is a complete night and day Ambulance Service available at Beverley, Goole and Selby.

The Howden Ambulance is to be incorporated into the Beverley Service.

This service is a considerable improvement on previous arrangements.

## BLOOD TRANSFUSION CENTRE.

Arrangements have been made for a Blood Transfusion (Donors) Centre at Howden, and the number of Volunteers has been extremely satisfactory.

## HOSPITALS.

The Westfield Fever Hospital is available for Infectious Diseases.

The Goole Bartholomew Hospital is available for Accidents and Surgical Cases, and the St. John's Hospital for Chronic Sick Cases.

The Shortage of Beds for Chronic Sick Cases makes one feel that the closing of the Howden Institution was, as we thought, a major blunder.



The Council have been able to abate some of the cases of overcrowding by allocating a percentage of new houses to such cases, but there are other cases where it is desirable that adequate accommodation should be provided. I think it is a well known fact that overcrowding is one of the chief pre-disposing causes of Tuberculosis.

#### DRAINAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

The general low level of the district makes the problem of drainage one of peculiar difficulty.

In Howden town, the greater part of the town is drained into a watercourse, the Old Derwent, which discharges into the Ouse. Part of the watercourse, or sewer, is culverted and passes under the houses. In a dry period sewage stagnates on the sides and becomes very offensive. The open sections were cleaned out during the year, and during a dry period tides are sent up from the Ouse to improve prevailing conditions. Part of the town drains into a sluggish open drain known as Carter's Drain. In general, in other parts of the district, house drains discharge in open water courses, ditches, brick ponds, and at Newport into the Canal.

An enquiry was held by the Ministry of Health at Beverley on 21st July, 1948, in connection with the proposed Joint Sewage Scheme for parts of the Beverley and Howden district. The parishes concerned in the Howden areas were Hotham, North Cave, Newport and Gilberdyke. A similar enquiry was held in October of the previous year in connection with the proposed scheme for Howden.

#### PUBLIC CLEANSING.

The scheme of refuse collection for the whole district has been in operation over  $4\frac{1}{2}$  years, and has, generally speaking, given considerable satisfaction to the public, who much appreciate this service.

Some progress has been made during the year with the conversion of privy ash pits to the pan system, 23 conversions being carried out. Very good progress has been made with conversions since the inception of the scheme. The main problem is tipping which requires careful watching.

#### MILK AND DAIRIES ORDER.

The milk produced in the area is collected and taken to the large towns, also to a Milk Factory at Holme-on-Spalding Moor. There is too much time lag between production and delivery to the towns, and there is much that is unsatisfactory in collection and distribution, but the difficulty has doubtless been one of transport.

It is a matter for regret that churns of milk stand by the roadside often for long periods in hot sun during the summer before being collected.

During the year improvements were carried out to 8 cowsheds. 317 visits were paid to cowsheds, and it was found necessary to require cleansing and lime-washing of premises on several occasions, but generally speaking, particularly in view of labour conditions, there has been an improvement in the cleansing of cowsheds, dairies and equipment.

The number of milking machines in use has increased, but unless strict attention is paid to cleansing of the machines the milk produced can be less satisfactory than that produced by hand milking.

There is 1 licensed Pasteurising Plant in the district at Messrs. Southwick's Dairies, Holme-on-Spalding Moor; this is of the High Temperature Short-Time type, fitted with an Automatic Temperature Control and has a capacity of 500 gallons per hour.

On 1st October the control of milk production passed from the Local Authorities to the Ministry of Agriculture.

## INSPECTION OF FOOD AND FOOD PREMISES.

During the year routine inspections were carried out at food shops, cafés and premises where food is prepared, and small quantities of foodstuffs were condemned. No slaughtering of animals for sale for human consumption is carried out in the district, as centralised slaughtering takes place at Goole under the control of the Ministry of Food.

When conditions return to normal, it is hoped that it may be possible to slaughter locally as all butchers have electric refrigerators. Centralised slaughtering may have some of the advantages claimed for it, but it involves too much handling of the meat before it reaches the consumer. It is quite obvious that the present method of distribution is most unhygienic and unsatisfactory.

## RURAL HOUSING SURVEY.

Very good progress has been made in carrying out the Housing Survey. Details of the houses inspected and recorded are as follows:—

No. Houses in District	No. of Houses inspected	Category					Found over- crowded
		1	2	3	4	5	
2434	2357	259	541	1061	83	413	66
	96.7 %	10.9 %	22.9 %	47.4 %	3.54 %	18.8 %	2.8 %

## TUBERCULOSIS.

During the year there were 2 Deaths from Tuberculosis, and 14 new cases were notified.

Five of these Notifications were from the Brighton Camp for Displaced Persons.

## NOTIFIABLE INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

There were only 2 cases of Scarlet Fever.

The Epidemics of Measles and Whooping Cough settled down in the Early Summer.

There were no cases of Diphtheria, Poliomyelitis, Typhoid or Paratyphoid.

## VENEREAL DISEASES.

The Clinic for the Area is at Goole Bartholomew Hospital on Fridays :—Women 5 p.m.; Men 8 p.m.

## IMMUNISATION AGAINST DIPHTHERIA.

This is being satisfactorily done in the Area, although the Official Figures are not reliable at present.

All Schools are under the County Council with the exception of one small Private School in Howden. Reports are sent by the Head Teacher to the Medical Officer of Health of absentees from School suffering from Infective Sickness.

I am,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

**F. WIGGLESWORTH,**

Medical Officer of Health.



# Report of the Chief Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor for the Year 1949

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To the Chairman and Members of the  
Howden Rural District Council.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in submitting for your consideration a brief Report concerning the Sanitary Administration of your District for the year ending 31st December, 1949.

## COUNCIL HOUSES.

During the year under review the following houses were completed and occupied :—

Eastrington ..	4 Airey	Spaldington ..	6 Airey
Bubwith ...	1 Airey	Holme/Moor..	20 Aluminium
Howden ...	16 Airey		16 Airey
Hotham ...	2 Airey	Ellerton ...	2 Airey
Wressle ...	7 Airey	Foggathorpe ..	6 Airey
Laxton ...	8 Traditional	Broomfleet ...	12 Airey
Faxfleet ...	4 Airey	Barmby ..	10 Airey
Asselby ...	4 Traditional		

Total 118.

## IN COURSE OF ERECTION.

Newport ...	20 Traditional	Ellerton ...	4 Airey
Holme/Moor..	2 Airey	Brind ...	2 Airey

Total 28.

## PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.

During the year 6 houses were erected by Private Enterprise.

## OVERCROWDING.

This problem is of a fluctuating nature. The Rural Survey carried out during the year revealed 50 cases of overcrowding. Based on the legal interpretation of the Overcrowding Act of 1936, most of the cases referred to were of a minor nature. There can, of course, be moral overcrowding as opposed to the legal standard.



The Housing Survey was carried out by Mr. Bridge, who left the service of the Council early in September; as Rural houses are not numbered it is impossible to trace the small number that have not been surveyed, and the survey must therefore be considered to be completed. As approximately 97% of the houses have been inspected this is sufficient to give a fairly accurate picture of the Housing conditions in general.

#### CONTROL OF CIVIL BUILDING.

The increase of the allowance for the repair of houses from £10 to £100 has resulted in some easement of the work involved in the issue of licences. During the year under review 37 building licences were issued as compared with 235 licences in the previous year.

#### TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING.

This Act came into force on 1st July, 1948, and superseded the previous Acts under which the Local Authority was the Interim Development Authority. The County Council are now the Authority under the Act, but Local Authorities have delegation. Delegation by the County Committee has proved to be a sensible and wise decision as it enables co-operation and consultations between the County Planning Officer and the Officers of local authorities. Personally, I have found the relations between the Planning Department and myself to be most cordial.

#### RATS AND MICE DESTRUCTION ACT, 1919. INFESTATION ORDER, 1943.

At the request of the County Council, your Council accepted delegation under the Act of 1919, and although you have no special staff for the work, any major infestation brought to notice has been dealt with. The Agricultural Committee deal with farm premises, and the Local Authority is supposed to deal with the other infestations: as there are farms in all villages, one wonders where the line of demarcation can be drawn. It is understood that a new Act will come into force in 1950 when all control will be vested in the Local Authority.

#### WATER SUPPLY.

During the year a number of connections have been made to the Council's mains for household and agricultural purposes, resulting in an increase of consumption. Your Council obtain water from the Pocklington District and from Goole, but the bulk of water used is obtained from your own Newbald Waterworks. Samples of water submitted for bacteriological examination proved the water to be of high quality.

The consumption of water for the year was over 157 million gallons; this is about 26 million more than the previous year, due in part to additional supply to the Beverley Rural District.

Details are as follows :—

From Goole	...	...	...	21,670,000
From Pocklington	...	...	...	22,366,000
From Newbald	...	...	...	113,688,000

## FACTORIES.

The chief factories in the district are Anderton's Chemical Works at Howdendyke and a Milk Factory at Holme-on-Spalding Moor. There are also Brickworks and a number of premises which come within the scope of the Factories Act of 1938.

Several visits were made to these premises and no action was found to be necessary.

In addition, there is a Government-controlled Flax Factory at Howden.

## HOUSING (General Observations).

The lifting during 1948 of the £10 building licence to £100 has meant that more necessary repairs have been carried out, although at the same time it is true to say that there has been little improvement as regards cottages let at very low rents; owing to the high cost of repairs owners cannot possibly carry out anything but very minor repairs and this must inevitably result in further deterioration of such property. The condition of many cottages has shown a marked deterioration during and since the war and this must inevitably lead to condemnation of cottages which would have had several more years of useful life had it been possible to carry out essential repairs.

The Council have, although the rate of progress has been slower than desired, made every effort to erect houses for the accommodation of those without homes. This need is gradually being met and the problem in the future will be the re-housing of those living in sub-standard houses. The Council are aware of, and concerned with, the high cost of Council houses. In my opinion some reduction in cost might be achieved in respect of roads and sewage disposal works.

On a small housing site it is surely not necessary to construct roads capable of carrying heavy traffic when all that is required is a road able to take occasional tradesmen's vehicles. The provision of Sewage disposal works adds very considerably to the cost of a small number of houses and

such provision could well wait until a proper sewerage scheme was available for all, particularly as the Council have an efficient public cleansing scheme in operation.

Some parts of the district are still without a supply of electricity and this has caused your Council some concern, but here the difficulty is again labour and materials, the demand greatly exceeding the supply; however, the position is gradually improving.

## A RESUME OF SANITARY ADMINISTRATION OVER A PERIOD OF 25 YEARS.

On 9th December I completed 25 years of service with your Council and it is perhaps worth while to comment on the Public Health and general Sanitary Administration of your district during that period.

When I entered the service of the Council the sanitary circumstances of the district were, like a considerable number of rural districts, anything but satisfactory, but since then good progress has been made.

In April, 1924, the Rural District Councils Slaughterhouse Order came into force and this brought such premises and the systematic inspection of meat into line with the Urban Areas.

In 1926 the Milk and Dairies Order came into force; at that time the sanitary condition of cowsheds left much to be desired. A start was made with the filtering of milk and cleaner methods of production. A considerable number of insanitary cowsheds were brought up to a reasonable standard and several new cowsheds have been erected; all this was carried out without formal action by the Council.

With the advent of water supplies the use of water bowls became fairly general and the use of milking machines to save labour has been accelerated in recent years. I venture to suggest that milk production in this district compares favourably with that of any other.

The Council embarked gradually on schemes of water supplies which now serve all villages and hamlets and is available to all excepting a number of farm premises situate at a considerable distance from the water mains. What a boon to the public these schemes have been in a district which suffered severely in a time of drought.

A few years ago the Council instituted a public cleansing service to cover all the main parishes and hamlets and I have been successful in securing the abolition of many of those abominations known as privy-ashpits. When I remember the offensive accumulations of refuse in the vicinity of houses



and often in close proximity to shallow wells before the advent of a public water supply, I realise how beneficial this service has been to the public. The accumulations referred to were absolute breeding grounds for flies and were a distinct menace to health.

The Housing programme is a real headache to all Local Authorities, but in spite of the many difficulties that have to be faced, the number of houses erected represents quite a good achievement. Before the war the Council made good progress and quite a number of insanitary houses were demolished either by persuasion or the issue of Demolition Orders, and Clearance Areas confirmed by the Ministry of Health. The continuance of this work had to be abandoned when the war broke out.

Other housing matters were a survey under the Overcrowding Act, and more recently a housing survey of all houses coming within a certain rateable value.

Drainage or lack of drainage is a most difficult problem in this flat area. Open drains or sewers are cleansed and minor improvements have been made from time to time, but the only solution is sewage schemes for all the built-up areas. Such schemes could only be carried out at a very considerable cost and would be impossible without substantial grants; even so, the Council have not hesitated to put forward proposals for sewage disposal in all the main villages.

There are a number of Public Health and Housing Acts which have come into force during the period under review and to which I have made no reference, neither have I made any special reference to hundreds of nuisances dealt with during this period.

Perhaps the most important and least spectacular of all public health administration is the giving of advice and the use of persuasion in securing better conditions wherever necessary, and I trust that I have not been unsuccessful in this respect.

My observations over the years covered by this review lead me to the conclusion that the provision of water supplies, public cleansing service and other steps taken by the Council is reflected in the improved general standard of health in the district and I feel sure that your Medical Officer of Health would be in full agreement with this opinion.

I am, Madam Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

**KENNETH MONTGOMERY,**

Chief Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor.